



# FATHERS - T O - B E

Fathers make a world of difference

## Top Fatherhood Tips for Birthcare Professionals

- **Welcome!** This is a very important element for a father. Using the word welcome and demonstrating it through your conversations and actions gives him the experience that he is included and important during pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

### Welcoming means .....

- .....asking a father his opinion and what he wants and needs.
- ..... understanding that a man having an emotional or feeling response to a partner's pregnancy is a form of connection to the child, family and becoming a father.
- .....inquiring about how he is doing (feeling).
- .....supporting him to speak openly and regularly to you, his partner and other fathers.
- .....encouraging fathers to read and go to classes. This is best if it includes some material specifically designed for fathers. Recommend some.
- .....if you do not have access to the father, then enquire through mum about him.
- .....asking what they, the couple, have decided about his involvement during the birth. If they have not discussed it encourage them to do so.
- .....making sure dad understands what he might expect during labour as regards 'labour pain'. Describe the unique nature of 'labour pain' as distinctly different to other forms of pain he may be more familiar with.
- .....understanding 'Why' is usually important for a man. Describe the relationship between adrenalin and oxytocin (birthing hormones) and the important influence fathers can have on this.
- .....understanding feminine timing in birth. Each woman's labour is unique and happens in her own time. Fathers learning to relax around this issue is paramount.
- .....making clear to dads that there may be a hierarchy of influence in a birthing room which may need to be negotiated.
- .....being sure the couple has a birth plan and that dad, as his partners advocate, is familiar with it and knows to present it to hospital staff.
- .....letting him know that birth is inherently safe and his partner is 'designed' to give birth, she will be able to do it and his trusting this is important.
- .....making sure he is informed about the benefits of breastfeeding for his new baby as well as mum. Flag the possibility that it could cause him to feel certain unexpected things.
- .....pointing out the importance and value of skin to skin contact with a baby, especially for him.
- .....supporting mums in understanding that her trusting dad and his contact with his new child is important.

The Fathers-To-Be consults with trusts and organisations regarding fathering policies and procedures. We offer study days, workshops and lectures in various formats to support working relationships with men during the time of pregnancy, birth and the early childhood.

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